



**8TH ANNUAL MEETING  
NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT  
FOR SEPTEMBER 10, 2008 TO SEPTEMBER 16, 2009**

**PRESENTED BY MONIQUE RICHARD  
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REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE NETWORK'S FOUNDING ASSEMBLY AND HOST OF THE SECRETARIAT**

**SALTA, SALTA, ARGENTINA  
SEPTEMBER 16, 2009**

## Role of the Secretariat of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

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The Québec Secretariat of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) also acts as secretariat for the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas. This has been the case since the Network's founding in 1999 by the Québec National Assembly.

The Québec National Assembly provides the Network with a full-time advisor as well as the technical and administrative support of its Interparliamentary and International Relations Directorate.

The Network advisor performs the Secretariat's regular tasks, distributes information, coordinates communications within the Network (specifically with regard to the organization of annual meetings and Executive Committee meetings), ensures official Network documents<sup>1</sup> are translated and oversees the development and updating of the website and databanks.

The Secretariat is responsible for the President's general correspondence relating to Network activities. It drafts letters, responds to requests for information on the Network and sends information to Network Executive Committee members.

The Secretariat is also responsible for updating and developing the Network website ([www.feminamericas.org](http://www.feminamericas.org)), that is, for

- announcing Network activities
- preparing documents as follow-up to meetings
- developing document databases.

To this end, with the support of a number of the National Assembly of Québec service branches, the Secretariat has developed specialized electronic document databases on

- *Gender budget analysis*
- *The impact of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on women*
- *Women and migrations in the Americas*
- *The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its implementation in the Americas*
- *Human Trafficking in the Americas.*

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1. In accordance with the agreement covering shared responsibility for translation between the COPA secretariats, signed in Porlamar, Isla Margarita, Venezuela, in February 2003.

During the 2008–2009 term, the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas Secretariat focused its efforts primarily in the following areas:

- (1) Developing and implementing the President's action plan
- (2) Developing tools related to the Network's main theme
- (3) Preparing and following up on annual meetings and Executive Committee meetings in cooperation with the Network President
- (4) Providing support to the President to represent and promote the Network
- (5) Managing the Network's website.

### **(1) Developing and implementing the President's action plan**

The President's action plan serves to guide the Network's efforts in reaching concrete objectives during the 2008–2009 term. In close cooperation with the Network's President, the Secretariat focused on the development and implementation of an action plan that reflects the President's priorities, taking into account the Network's mission as described in its statutes.

The action plan is therefore divided into three separate sections, one for each of the President's priorities: an education and public awareness campaign on violence against women; the promotion of the Network throughout the Americas; and the development of and follow-up on the work themes identified at the 7th Annual Meeting.

Thanks to COPA's President, a conference was given on the theme of violence against women at the meeting of the Executive Committee in El Calafate, Santa Cruz, Argentina on January 24, 2009. During the 7th Annual Meeting of the Network, the Secretariat oversaw the organization of a round table on that theme, as approved by the members of the Network's Executive Committee. The round table enabled parliamentarians from the various regions of the Americas and specialists in the field to exchange views.

The Secretariat also recommended strategies to ensure that the Network's actions were coherent and had the maximum effect. These strategies were proposed for the 2009–2014 period.

### **(2) Developing tools related to the Network's main theme**

The Network Secretariat provided parliamentarians with a document to help them in their effort to eliminate violence against women. Since the Network has just begun examining this subject, the purpose of the text was to establish the parameters that define violence against women, outline the problem on a global and continental scale, introduce the main legal and normative instruments relevant to the issue and guide the parliamentarians' reflections on the subject.

The Network provided, as an appendix to the document, a list, divided by country, of the laws in force that address violence against women. Parliamentarians were invited to complete the list as needed.

The Secretariat also created a section on violence against women on the Network website. It intends to update the section with relevant documents for women parliamentarians as the Network's research advances. Members of the Network are encouraged to contribute to that section of the site by sending documentation from their countries.

### **(3) Preparing and following up on annual meetings and Executive Committee meetings in cooperation with the Network President**

The Network Secretariat followed up on the 7th Annual Meeting held in Mexico City (F.D.), Mexico on September 10, 2008, by drafting and translating the meeting report, translating the documents adopted at the meeting and posting them on the Network/COPA website.

During the 2008–2009 term, the Secretariat prepared and organized Executive Committee meetings, working in close cooperation with the Network President and the hosts of the meetings held in El Calafate, Santa Cruz, Argentina on January 24, 2009. The main tasks performed by the Secretariat included the following:

- Preparing, translating and forwarding meeting invitations and agendas
- Distributing information about the meetings on the Network website and to Executive Committee members
- Preparing all necessary meeting documents
- Drafting and providing translations of the meeting reports

The Secretariat also prepared the 8th Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, which is being held in Salta, Salta, Argentina on September 16, 2009. In cooperation with the other COPA secretariats, it drafted and translated the invitation, the agenda and other meeting documents. To ensure the meeting was properly promoted, the Secretariat, in cooperation with the COPA Executive Secretariat, coordinated the forwarding of Annual Meeting invitations by email and regular mail to authorities at every Parliament and interparliamentary organization in the Americas. It also took care of posting and updating information about the meeting on the Network website. In addition, the Secretariat coordinated the organization of a round-table discussion on the main theme, provided support to the various speakers and oversaw logistical arrangements in cooperation with the hosts of COPA's 9th General Assembly.

### **(4) Providing support to the President to represent and promote the Network**

During the 2008–2009 term, the Network Secretariat provided support to the President through the following activities as she represented and promoted the Network:

- The Secretariat provided the President with the information and tools she needed to ensure the Network was well represented when she attended a meeting of women parliamentarians of Latin America and the Caribbean organized by the UNDP and UNIFEM in Madrid on June 15 and 16, 2009. *“Women in politics who effect change. Who are they?”* was the theme of that event, which she attended both as a Member of the National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and as President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas.
- The Secretariat also translated the press releases and ensured they were sent to the members of the Executive Committee and posted on the Network's website.

### **(5) Managing the Network's website**

The Secretariat is in charge of regularly updating the *Feminamericas* website, where it announces the various meetings and posts official documents stemming from those meetings.